

For NSSM 246,

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Soviet expectations over the next ten years evidently reach well beyond a capability for intercontinental conflict that merely assures retaliation sufficient to deter an all-out attack.

-- Some believe that the Soviets do not presently count on a combination of actions by the USSR and lack of actions by the US which would produce for them capabilities so effective that the USSR could devastate the US while preventing the US from devastating the USSR. This belief reflects in part the high Soviet respect for US technological prowess and Soviet concern that recent developments in US strategy and weapons programs could affect their own strategic position adversely. However, the Soviets are probably striving for a war fighting and war survival posture that would leave the USSR in a stronger position than the US if war occurred. The Soviet leaders probably hope that their forces will give them more latitude than they have had in the past for the vigorous pursuit of foreign policy objectives, and that they will discourage the US and others from using force or the threat of force to hinder Soviet actions.

-- Others believe the Soviets aim to achieve such a degree of military superiority over the West as to permit them to wage and win a nuclear war. Such a position would allow Moscow to exert military pressure to deter US initiatives, thereby advancing overall Soviet objectives of gaining a dominant position in the world. They also believe Soviet force developments over the past several years, and prospective programs for the next several years, indicate the Soviets see those